State policies that promote health, education, and strong families can help the early development and school readiness of America’s youngest citizens. This profile highlights Arkansas’s policy choices alongside other data related to the well-being of young children.

**Health and Nutrition**

States can support young children’s development by making key policy choices in early health and development. This section of ITO highlights states’ policy choices for supporting young children’s wellbeing: 1) Access to and continuity of health care, including state Medicaid/CHIP eligibility levels and coverage of legal immigrant children; 2) Parents’ access to health care, including for low-income pregnant women, and access to a medical home for young children; and 3) Preventive screening and assessment, including adherence to recommended schedules for well-child visits.

**Early Care and Education**

States make important decisions about the early care and education services they provide to young children and families. This section of ITO highlights states’ key policy choices that affect children’s development and parents’ ability to work: 1) Access to childcare, including subsidy eligibility levels and reimbursement rates; and 2) States’ investment in Head Start, Early Head Start, pre-kindergarten, child care centers’ class size and student-teacher ratios and investment in infant/toddler specialist networks and credentials and Quality Rating Improvement Systems.

**Parenting and Economic Supports**

States make critical policy choices that help low-income parents effectively support young children’s healthy development. This section of ITO spotlights states’ policy choices related to important economic supports for low-income families with young children: 1) TANF requirements for parents of young children; and 2) Income support policies including tax relief, earned income and dependent care tax credits, as well as child support disregards.

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**Young children (under age 6)**: 227,143

**Young children by income, 2013**

- Above low income 43%
- Less than 100% FPL 31%
- 100%-200% FPL 19%
- Low income 58%

Among young children, 14% live in extreme poverty (less than 50% FPL).

**Young children by race/ethnicity, 2013**

- White 63%
- Black 19%
- Hispanic 12%
- Asian 2%
- Other 3%

**Exposure to multiple risk factors among young children, 2013**

- 0 Risks 36%
- 1-2 Risks 44%
- 3+ Risks 20%

* This graph includes all possible risk factors: poor, single parent, teen mother, low parental education, nonemployed parents, residential mobility, households without English speakers, and large family size.
HEALTH AND NUTRITION

State Choices to Promote Access

Income eligibility limit for public health insurance (Medicaid/CHIP) at or above 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). [2013]2

- Children <1 year
  - Set eligibility at 200% (CHIP)
- Children ages 1-5 years
  - Set eligibility at 200% (CHIP)
- Children ages 6-8
  - Set eligibility at 200% (CHIP)
- Pregnant women
  - Set eligibility at 200% (CHIP)

☐ Medicaid and/or CHIP coverage for lawfully residing children [2013]3
☐ Medicaid and/or CHIP coverage for lawfully residing pregnant women [2013]3
☐ Provide temporary coverage to pregnant women under Medicaid until eligibility can be formally determined. [2013]2
☐ Provide temporary coverage to children under Medicaid or CHIP until eligibility can be formally determined. [2013]2
☐ Include at-risk children in the definition of eligibility for IDEA Part C. [2012]4
☐ Do not require redetermination of eligibility for Medicaid/CHIP more than once a year [2013]2
☐ Has adopted Medicaid expansion as part of the Affordable Care Act [2014]5

State Choices to Promote Quality

EPSDT screening periodicity schedule meets recommendations of American Academy of Pediatrics [FY 2013]6

- 7 require screenings for children <1 year
  - State requires 6 screens. 96% of eligible screens were completed in 2013.
- 4 require screenings for children 1-2 years
  - State requires 3 screens. 100% of eligible screens were completed in 2013.
- 3 require screenings for children 3-5 years
  - State requires 3 screens. 62% of eligible screens were completed in 2013.
- 4 require screenings for children 6-9 years
  - State requires 2 screens. 56% of eligible screens were completed in 2013.
- Require newborn screening for the 31 metabolic deficiencies/disorders and core conditions [2014]7
  - 29 universally required by law or rule.
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

State choices to promote access

☐ Set the income eligibility limit for child care subsidies at or above 200% FPL. [2014]8
  A family of three qualifies for assistance at $29,760, or 150% FPL. This reflects a decrease from 152% FPL in 2013.

☐ Child care subsidy reimbursement rate meets the recommended 75th percentile of the market rate [2014]8

☐ Redetermine the eligibility for child care subsidies no more than once per year [FY 2013]9
  Eligibility redetermined every six months.

☐ State supplements Early Head Start [2012]10

☑ Fund a pre-kindergarten program and/or supplement Head Start. [2013]11
  $111,000,000 for prekindergarten

☑ Requires districts to offer full day kindergarten [2014]12

Monthly child care co-payment fees as a percent of income for a family of three with one child in care, 20148

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Monthly Co-Payment Fee</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% FPL</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150% FPL</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

State choices to promote quality

☐ Require one adult for every four 18-month-olds, and a maximum class size of eight in child care centers. [2013]13
  Child care regulations require one adult for every 9 children, and the maximum class size is 18.

☑ Allocate state or federal funds for a network of infant/toddler specialists that provide assistance to child care providers. [2013]14

☑ Have early learning standards or developmental guidelines for infants and toddlers. [2013]14

☑ Have an infant/toddler credential. [2013]14

☐ Require through regulation that infants and toddlers in child care centers be assigned a consistent primary caregiver. [FY 2013]15

☐ Require one adult for every 10 4-year-olds, and a maximum class size of 20 in child care centers. [2013]13
  Child care regulations require one adult for every 15 children, and the maximum class size is 30.

☑ Have implemented a statewide Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) [2015]16

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth grade math and reading scores9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Type</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math Score Proficiency level*</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School lunch eligible children**</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Eligible children***</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

State choices to promote quality, continued


**EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION**

State choices to promote quality, continued

- Requires one teacher for every 18 students in Kindergarten classrooms [2013]^{17}
  - Requires one teacher for every 20 students, 22 with an instructional aide.

- State has adopted Common Core Standards [2015]^{18}
  - NCCP believes that Common Core State Standards should be used in conjunction with guidelines for social emotional learning.

- State has comprehensive, free-standing standards for social emotional learning at the K-12 level [2015]^{19}
PARENTING AND ECONOMIC SUPPORTS

State choices to promote effective parenting

☐ Provide option to extend Medicaid coverage for family planning to otherwise ineligible low-income women [2015]20

☐ Exempt single parents on TANF from work requirements until the youngest child reaches age 1. [FY 2013]21

  Parent must return to work when child is 3 months; exemption limited to 12 cumulative months during recipient's lifetime.

☐ Reduce the TANF work requirement to 20 hours or less for single parents with children under age 6 [FY 2013]21

  Required to work 30 hours.

State choices to support family economic security

☐ Established a state minimum wage that meets or exceeds $9.10/hr and is indexed to inflation [2014]22

  $6.25

☐ Exempt single-parent families of three below the poverty level from personal income tax. [2012]23

  Up to 103% FPL

☐ Offer a refundable state Earned Income Tax Credit. [2014]24

☐ Offer a refundable state dependent care tax credit. [2014]25

  A credit of 20% of the *allowed* federal "child care credit" for children under six in an "approved child care facility."

☐ Keep copayments for child care subsidies below 10% of family income for families of three at 150% FPL [2014]8

  The state lowered copayments for families receiving child care assistance as of March 2014, from as much as 80 percent of the cost of care to a maximum of 8 percent of the cost of care.

☐ Offer exemptions and/or extensions of the TANF benefit time limit for women who are pregnant or caring for a child under age 6. [FY 2013]21

☐ Has paid family leave for a minimum of 6 weeks with full or partial replacement of wages [2013]26
DATA NOTES AND SOURCES

1. National data were calculated from the 2013 American Community Survey, representing information from 2013. State data were calculated from the 2011-2013 American Community Survey, representing information from the years 2011-2013.


9. *Fourth-grade students performing at the Proficient level in math should consistently apply integrated procedural knowledge and conceptual understanding to problem solving in the five NAEP content areas. http://nces.ed.gov

10. **Fourth-grade students performing at the Proficient level in reading should be able to integrate and interpret texts and apply their understanding of the text to draw conclusions and make evaluations. http://nces.ed.gov

11. The state's average NAEP score for children eligible for school lunch.

12. The state's average NAEP score for children not eligible for school lunch.


This profile is a product of NCCP's Improving the Odds for Young Children initiative, funded by the Alliance for Early Success. The information represents the most recent 50-state data sources and will be updated with the release of new data. See http://www.nccp.org/profiles/early_childhood.html for other state profiles.